Cargo and Person Screening

Cargo Screening

Every year almost 250 million tons of cargo crosses our Nation?s land borders or arrives at our airports and seaports where it is then conveyed across our vast and complex maritime, air, rail, and roadway infrastructures. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection performs the massive tasks of administratively screening and physically scanning cargo in-bound to the United States to detect material that could potentially be used in terrorism-related or other criminal activities. Improved information sharing and collaboration among federal, state, and local homeland security, public safety, and law enforcement organizations that participate in the screening process can improve efficiency and help prevent potential terrorist attacks.

Accordingly, the PM-ISE is supporting mission partners in their efforts to develop cross governmental cargo security standards and architectures?built on existing systems?to address terrorism-related secure cargo information access, data distribution, and sharing. As a result, decision makers will be better prepared to detect, prevent, or mitigate terrorist attacks or other criminal behavior.

Because of the magnitude of the task, the first step in this process was to scope the effort to better manage it. An interagency team analyzed key business processes and information flows involving nuclear and radiological threat data on inbound cargo transported over land and sea. This analysis identified three opportunities to bolster information sharing and collaboration to improve the Nation?s defenses against acts of nuclear and radiological terrorism:

- Sharing information on adjudicated radiological shipments;
- Standardized information sharing on general radiological shipments and licenses; and
- Sharing post-seizure analysis and information.

These vetted use-cases will now be used to define the requirements and data elements necessary for developing new cargo screening functional standards for the ISE.

Improved Person Screening Using Biometrics

Historically, the person screening process has relied largely on name recognition through the use of watchlists. Given the inherent problems with spelling and duplication that inevitably occur with name-based screening, the Federal Government, the private sector, and partner nations are working to modernize and improve personal identification, authentication, and access control through the use of biometrics.

Extensive biometric screening research and technology supports these mission areas, through the use of face, finger, and iris recognition modalities. The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Subcommittee on Biometrics and Identity Management led an interagency effort to develop the NSTC Policy for Enabling the Development, Adoption and Use of Biometric standards, and an associated Registry of U.S. Government Recommended Biometric Standards.21 This effort ensures that common biometric standards are adopted across all federal systems, that they support interoperability, and that they

are potentially extensible to non-federal partners and systems. By participating in these efforts during the development stage, the PM-ISE and our partners can plan for the development of interoperable ISE standards support and improve the accuracy and reliability of person screening processes. The use of biometrics is expanding at the SLT level as well. Law Enforcement agencies in the National Capital Region can now use a handheld tool to wirelessly access biometric data and arrest history. This project integrates two regional information-sharing programs?the National Capital Region Automated Biometric Identification System project and the National Capital Region Law Enforcement Information Exchange.

The Biometric Identification System project takes an unknown subject?s fingerprint and compares it wirelessly against the database of biometric information. The Law Enforcement Information Exchange system provides search tools to allow local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to access data on arrests, booking information, citations, and other important law enforcement information.

The project, which was supported by a DHS grant, allows officers to access information from both systems using the handheld tool. This gives law enforcement the ability not only to recognize suspects who lack identification or who may be attempting to mask their identities, but to also determine arrest history and other useful information.

National Targeting Center?Passenger (NTCP)

The NTC-P is responsible for coordinating DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP) field-level activities related to anti-terrorism efforts and plays a vital role in the identification of individuals who pose a national security concern at 327 U.S. ports of entry and over 30 Border Patrol checkpoints throughout the U.S. The NTC-P is the CBP focal point for all possible Terrorist Screening Data Base (TSDB) encounters with CBP field entities and is the primary contact between CBP field offices and other government agency case agents on all positive TSDB encounters.

NTC-P uses several automated enforcement data processing systems which are focused on detecting and preventing terrorist access to the United States including the Automated Targeting System-Passenger and the Intelligence Operations Framework System. These systems allow NTC-P to screen passenger manifests and related information prior to a passenger?s arrival in the United States and to respond to terrorism related alerts and provide time sensitive research and support on any issues related to international passengers and travel at and between U.S. ports of entry.

The Center is a part of the CBP layered approach strategy to homeland security by pushing U.S. borders outward and attempting to interdict possible terrorists and other mala fide travelers before they can board a U.S.-bound. NTC-P has on-site liaison officers from the FAMS, ICE, TSA, the Department of State, and the Citizenship and Immigration Service Fraud Detection and National Security Division.
